

REMARKS

The Office Action dated March 17, 2005, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in response thereto. Claims 1-5, 12-13, 16-21, 24 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kato (the '663 patent). The claims of this application have been amended and specifically recite the structure illustrated in Figure 5, in which the coupler is driveably connected to the ring gear of the epicyclic gearset and includes a selector that moves between a first position where the coupler completes a drive connection that holds the ring gear against rotation, and a second position where the coupler driveably connects the ring gear and power input or transmission output shaft 38'. This arrangement is not present in the cited prior art. Specifically, Kato teaches an arrangement in which the coupler has the first position that driveably holds the ring gear against rotation, and a second position where the coupler connects the ring gear and the carrier of the epicyclic gear set.

Claims 6, 7, 14, 15, 22, and 23 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as under patentable over Kato, and further in view of Williams (the '603 patent). The Office action acknowledges that Kato lacks a teaching that the coupler is a synchronizer, but it cites Williams for teaching a synchronizer in paragraph 17. Nonetheless, the amended claims distinguish over the combination that results upon combining the epicyclic gear set of Kato and the synchronizer of Williams.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, the claims of the subject application define the invention over the prior art references, and appear now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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